

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 and 20-22 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 8-17, and 20-22 have been amended.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-17 and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,477,533 (Schiff) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,948,040 (DeLorme) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,266,648 (Baker) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,622,125 (Cragun) or U.S. Patent Publication No. 20020133385 (Box) in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2001/0044788 (Demir).

As explained on pages 3, line 9 to page 5, line 3 of the specification, the present invention, by making a reservation for time-limited discount services at a shop and visiting the shop during the time period, allows a customer to receive reserved discount services or transaction favors, thereby leveling the number of customers coming into the shop. The present invention is directed to equalizing the number of customers who visit a shop by setting a time discount so that a discount rate in quiet time periods becomes higher than the discount rate in busy or normal time periods.

According to the description in the specification at page 19, line 20 through page 21, line 12, a reservation rate is calculated by division of a reservation number by a value obtained through subtraction of a prospective number of persons coming to a shop without reservation from a target number of persons coming to the shop. A discount rate is calculated, using the table in FIG. 4(d) showing the correspondence between the reservation rate and the discount rate. Therefore, the difference between the target number of persons coming to a shop and the prospective number of persons coming to a shop is greater in the quiet time period, and thus the reservation rate becomes lower, which permits automatic setting of a higher discount rate.

Due to the above factors, a discount rate for a quiet time period in which customers are desired to be induced can be set higher than that of a busy or normal time period, thereby automatically setting higher incentives to visit the shop in quiet time periods.

Further, with the increase of reservation number, the reservation rate becomes higher, and the discount rate is automatically lowered, thereby preventing inducement of customers beyond necessity.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the feature of the present invention pertaining to obtaining a reservation

rate. In contrast to the present invention, the references only refer to how to set the contents of services in a certain time period, without considering how to equalize the number of persons coming to a shop, that is, the feature of the present invention regarding obtaining a reservation rate.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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